



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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Contact: Vicki Reynolds

714 560-7455

[vicki.reynolds@sba.gov](mailto:vicki.reynolds@sba.gov)

### **U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION SANTA ANA DISTRICT OFFICE ANNOUNCES 2007 SMALL BUSINESS WEEK WINNERS**

**SANTA ANA, CALIF** – The Santa Ana District Office of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) will honor a distinguished group of small business owners and supporters at the annual ***Small Business Week Award Luncheon*** being held Thursday, May 17, 2007 at the Ontario Convention Center in Ontario. This year's theme is "Small Business...Dream Big." As part of National Small Business Week this award program pays tribute to those men and women who represent the best of America's entrepreneurial spirit. The luncheon is hosted by the Inland Empire Small Business Development Center and the Inland Empire Economic Partnership.

SBA District Director J. Adalberto Quijada said, "Our Small Business Week award winners are recognized for their outstanding contributions to the nation's economy and for their personal achievements. We are pleased to announce that in this year's competition our District garnered six district winners, one state winner and three regional winners".

Rob R. Ukropina, Founder and CEO of Overnite Express in Irvine, CA has been named the 2007 California Small Business Person of the Year. Ukropina is among 53 top small business persons - one from each state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico/Virgin Islands, and Guam - who will be honored by the SBA at national ceremonies in Washington, D.C. during April 23-24, 2007. State winners will compete for the National Small Business Person of the Year in April.

John J. O'Connor, Founder of Shamrock Supply Company, Inc. in Santa Ana, CA has been named District and Region IX winner of the Jeffrey Butland Family-Owned Business of the Year. Region IX includes Arizona, California, Hawaii and Nevada.

Don Gonneville, President and owner of Gonneville, Inc. in San Juan Capistrano, CA has been named District and Region IX Veteran Small Business Champion of the Year.

Addy Perez-Mau, Founder of Heaven Sent Jewelry in Fountain Valley, CA has been named District and Region IX Home-Based Business Champion of the Year. These regional winners will compete for the national title in their respective categories in April.

Santa Ana District Office winners are:

Gene Rosecrans, Vice President and Department Manager of Government Guaranteed Programs at PFF Bank & Trust in Rancho Cucamonga, CA, District Financial Services Champion of the Year;

Joe L. Gardner, President of Gardner Systems, Inc. in Santa Ana, CA, District Small Business Exporter of the Year;

Janet Cronick, President of Ultimate Gifts in Fountain Valley, CA, Women in Business Champion of the Year;

Bob Dixon, Editor of The Business Press in San Bernardino, CA, Small Business Journalist of the Year;

Joel Ayala, President and CEO of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Orange County in Santa Ana, CA, Minority Small Business Champion of the Year; and

Roberto Gallegos, President and CEO of Nuestra Casa Mortgage, Inc. in Santa Ana, CA, Finalist for Small Business Person of the Year.

The Small Business Week Award Luncheon is expected to attract over 850 people and will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The cost of the luncheon is \$75 per person. For more information or to make reservations, contact event coordinator Patty Holohan at (909) 793-2908 or [PSHoloha@aol.com](mailto:PSHoloha@aol.com).